GUIDE TO THE RF1 GREAT RUSSIA FILE

[The RF1 Great Russia file contains specific data on Great Russia or the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic (RSFSR) and its inhabitants since 1918. The RSFSR is one of sixteen republics forming the USSR and it contains more than half the area and population of the entire country. The RSFSR was the first republic established in the USSR, with a constitution adopted in 1918. Furthermore it is the republic representing the Russians and their culture and is consequently the nucleus of the USSR.

Most of the territory of the RSFSR is a plain which extends from Eastern Europe to the Pacific Ocean. There are occasionally low mounrain ranges, notably the Urals which separate European from Asian Russia. Three climatic zones run east-west. In the far north is the Arctic tundra, next is a temperate forest belt, and the southern zone is dominated by steppes and prairies. In European Russia the population is concentrated south of 60° latitude in industrial centers. Asian Russia, which consists primarily of Siberia, has a harsh climate, but in terms of natural resources, it is potentially the richest part of the RSFSR. The population is concentrated in the southern regions, mainly along the Trans-Siberan Railway.

The population in 1970 of the RSFSR was 130,079,000, over half of the population of the entire USSR. The average density in 1968 was only 19/sq. mile. Most of the population is Russian but about 10% of the population considered themselves to be members of other ethnic groups. The Russian language, a part of the eastern group of the Slavic branch of Indo-European, is dominant but minority languages are spoken. In some areas Russian is taught as a second

language, the minority languages being encourage by the government. Minority language groups have been the basis for setting up autonomous republics and oblasts, and national okrugs. Some of the languages represented are other Indo-European languages, Altaic, Uralic, and Paleo-Asiatic.

Eastern Slavic tribes entered the European area early and were united in the 10th century by Orthodox Christinaity. By the 10th century Kiev had become the center of trade and by the 12th century it had developed into a major power with ties to both Europe and Byzantium. In 1240 the Tatars invaded and held power for 250 years, during which time Russia was cut off from Western influences. During this time Moscow became the center of trade and the expanding empire. Ivan the Terrible was the first Tsar in the late 16th century. Peter the Great in the 18th century expanded the empire and attempted to westernize Russia. By the early 20th century, under Nicholas II, oppression and discontent were strong. In 1917 Nicholas abdicated and civil war broke out. The Bolshevik revolution under Lenin followed. The constitution of the RSFSR was adopted in 1918 and the constitution of the USSR was adopted in 1923. Lenin died in 1924 and was succeeded by Stalin.

The traditional economy was based on mixed farming with the major crops being cereal and potatoes. Most of the people were peasants with small land holdings. The USSR was the last major European power to undergo the industrial revolution and since Sovietization, industrialization has been the major economic objective. One of the first changes was the shift of industrial centers to the east. The government owns all the land, natural resources, industry, communications media, transport, banks, distribution facilities, housing, and municipal utilities. There are three types of

government controlled cooperatives--collective farms, industrial cooperatives, and consumer cooperatives.

The top level of the administrative subdivisions of the RSFSR is the oblast. Oblasts are divided into rayons, and rayons are made up of clusters of villages and worker's settlements. Cities are administered separately. In addition, there are Autonomous Republics, such as the Tatar ASSR, which contains oblasts of the own, and smaller units known as autonomous oblasts.

There are four sources in the RF1 Great Russia file. The sources are not continuously numbered, there are no sources numbered 2-4 at this time. 1: Fedotov is a study of Russian character traits. 5: American Russian Institute is the Constitution of the RSFSR as amended through 1949. 6: Tomasic is a study of the dynamics of power of Soviet Bolshevism. The source analyzes Russian culture and personality, the social and power structure of the Russian state, ideologies, and elites. Much data is given on historical factors contributing to the present situation. 7: Lineva is a study of peasant wedding ceremonies and folk songs in Great Russia and the Ukraine. It was published in 1893.

Since the RSFSR is the major republic of the USSR, and the two are inextricably related historically, politically, and culturally, the researcher is advised to consult the R1 Soviet Union file for additional information. The file was processed in 1955-1956.]

File guide based on:

Fitzsimmons, Thomas, and Clifford R. Barnett, John, C. Fiske, Peter Malof, and Florence K. Nierman

1956. Area Handbook for the Russian Heartland (RSFSR). The Washington Branch, Human Relations Area Files, Inc.

Golenpaul, Ann, editor
1974. Information Please Almanac Atlas and Yearbook 1975, 29th edition. New York, Dan Golenpaul Associates.

Keefe, Eugene K., and Arsene A. Boucher, Sarah J. Elpern, William Giloane, James M. Moore, Terence L. Ogden, Stephen Peters, John P. Prevas, Nancy E. Walstron, and Eston T. White.
1971. Area Handbook for the Soviet Union. Washington, U.S. Government Printing Office.